ALCMAEON
HYPERMESTRA
CAENEUS

BY

E. P. WARREN, M.A.

OXFORD
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ALCMAEON, HYPERMESTRA, CAENEUS.

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HYPERMESTRA
CAENEUS

BY

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OXFORD

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE legends in this book are treated freely and the author has not attempted archaeological or topographical exactitude. The description of Atalanta's cave is from Aelian.

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ALCMAEON

Χαίρων δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς
Ἀλκμᾶνα στεφάνοισι βάλλω.

PINDAR. *P.* viii.

NOTE

SINCE the story of Alcmaeon is complicated by the number of personages of several generations, the following notes are added for reference.

Talaos, the father of Adrastos and of Eriphyle, was driven out of Argos and killed by Amphiaraos. Adrastos and Eriphyle retreated to Sicyon, then called Aegialeia.

Afterward Adrastos returned to reign over Argos jointly with Amphiaraos, who married Eriphyle.

Alcmaeon and Amphilochos were sons of Amphiaraos and Eriphyle.

Adrastos had two sons, Aegialeus and, later, Cyanippos, and two daughters, Argeia and Deipyle.

Tydeus married Deipyle and Polynices Argeia, by whom he had a son, Thersandros.

Polynices had been deprived by his brother Eteocles of his joint right in the kingdom of Thebes. Together with Adrastos and other chiefs he made the attack of the "Seven against Thebes." The second attack was made by the sons of the Seven, known as the Epigoni, on Laodamas, the son of Eteocles.

The family of Atreus, which had succeeded Eurystheus at Mycenae, took no part in these wars.

ALCMAEON

I

THERE was a great storm. The rain poured from the roofs and along the gutters of the streets. Alcmaeon slept till, past midnight, a flash of lightning, followed by a crackling peal of thunder, wakened him. He was a stout boy and not afraid. He lay and listened to heavy balls rolling on the floor of heaven. But a wail was heard from the neighbouring room. Aegialeus, only four years old, was frightened. Alcmaeon groped across the passage and sat on the edge of his bed to soothe him : the child was always happy with Alcmaeon. The rumbling ceased, and there was only the downpour of the rain. Aegialeus grew quiet and pulled the pillow under his head, begging Alcmaeon nevertheless to stay with him. Alcmaeon, though chilly, waited, hoping that he would fall asleep. There were now other sounds than the rain—down the passage by the great door, or perhaps outside it in the porch, men's voices,

quarrelsome and loud. The door opened, letting a gust of wind down the passage; then it shut. The voices were quieter, but nearer. From the street no sound of footsteps. It must be late. Aegialeus was now sleeping, with one hand out of the bed-clothes.

Alcmaeon crept toward the entrance in the dark. Who could have come at this time? Suddenly a light was struck and he shrieked, for he saw before him two monsters, a man with a lion's head and a man with a boar's head. His mother, Eriphyle, would have taken him to bed; but his uncle said:

"The child will not sleep till he sees what these are."

Therefore Polynices threw back the lion's scalp from his hair and showed his human head to the boy, who began to laugh and asked whether the boar-man could also turn into a real man. Tydeus, less graciously, laid the boar-skin aside. Alcmaeon's fears were quieted, and he was led away.

Yet his mother sat by him, as he had sat by Aegialeus, for he was wakeful, as if he had witnessed some great event. She must explain to him whence the strangers came and what might be their errand. Eriphyle told him of the hunt in Calydon and of the slaughter of the boar whose skin hung from the head of Tydeus; and of Polynices she told how he had been driven forth by his brother from the kingdom that should now have been his, and of the greatness of that

kingdom and its castle, grander than the castle of Mycenae, and of the lion and the boar who had dragged the chariot of Harmonia, the first queen, when Zeus and the other gods came to her wedding, how she had then received from Hephaestos the necklace of glory and the robe of dominion, which now belonged to Polynices. To Argos he had come for help to obtain his right, the throne of Thebes.

Alcmaeon listened wide-eyed; but by degrees his mother's voice began to sound like a fountain playing in the darkness; and she saw that he was asleep.

Nevertheless she did not move; and her thoughts continued the tale; for the prophecy uttered by her husband, Amphiaraos, that wild saying which had seemed like madness, came back to her now; and she saw its meaning.

Her brother, Adrastos, had two daughters, Argeia and Deipyle. Of these Amphiaraos had prophesied that one would be married by a lion and the other by a boar. What could have been thus foreshadowed but the arrival of these two princes craving alliance? Truly the gods were now taking part in the fortunes of the house of Talaos; and for how long had those fortunes been doubtful? Since her very childhood, when he was king of Argos and Amphiaraos too young to assert his equal claim. The youth had sought her in marriage and her hand was promised. Reasons of state indeed dictated union between

the two royal houses: Amphiaraos, the head of the priesthood by right of descent from Melampus, would bring with him the support of a body, always dreaded and sometimes mistrusted, which endangered the royal control; but when he demanded his full birthright as equal with Talaos in reign, a quarrel arose between the two, and Talaos was driven out and slain in battle by Amphiaraos. His children, Adrastos and Eriphyle, took refuge in the neighbouring kingdom of Aegialeia, which passed into their possession; and there Eriphyle had grown into womanhood with a sense of injury and exile. There she had first seen Polynices, a courtly lad destined with his brother to inherit the throne of Oedipus then in his glory; and with him had come a temptation, for it lay in her power by a few words to become his wife and to escape from humiliation to Thebes, which commanded the North as Argos aspired to command the South; but her dignity, as a few years older, and her allegiance to her father's house had silenced her.

By her counsel Adrastos made himself strong in Aegialeia. It was ever in her mind that some day they should return to Argos; and tidings from Argos nourished the thought. For Amphiaraos, now master by the loss of her who had been his chief desire, was no longer the same; and, if she had understood him, she would have known that he had never been the hot, ambitious youth which he had seemed. Kingship was

nothing to him; and he would have resigned it but for the needs of the people and the tyranny of Talaos. His revolt had been the sacrifice of his choice, a life in the temple. Now, in his loneliness, he devoted himself more and more to priestly functions. The mantic nature of his race surged within him, overflowing his mind when he should have been occupied with the martial needs of a city surrounded by jealousies. To Eriphyle the way of conquest seemed open from Aegialeia.

Nevertheless, when he proposed a reconciliation to be sealed by marriage, she consented; and the terms of agreement set forth by Adrastos were devised by her. Instead of a hostile advance, there was a peaceful return; and Adrastos became in fact, though not in name, the sole king of Argos. She stood at his side. Between him and her husband her decisions prevailed, and indeed she could, by the compact of reconciliation, claim that they should prevail, if the kings differed; but more than the compact her steady preoccupation with affairs of state and the submission of her brother and the lassitude of her husband gave her control, lassitude produced by disappointment. During the years of separation Amphiaraos had continued to think of her as she was before her exile, a girl strong and confident, yet still girlish and yielding. Her confidence in him must, he knew, have been broken by the family feud; but her marriage was forgiveness to be met by gentleness. He knew not the woman who

returned from Aegialeia strengthened by misfortune. She would indeed have yielded, but to a rougher hand and a frank mastery—to the warrior who had overcome her father; the augur she despised.

Yet, as she sat beside the bed, she feared him. The fulfilment of his prophecy showed that his counsels, so lightly daffed aside, embodied in fact a foresight not given to her. If he should stand against the invasion of Boeotia, she could hardly support it. But, if the prophecy was true, why not the omens? What, if the boar and lion betokened the passing of Harmonia's power from Thebes to Argos? What, if the necklace of glory and the robe of dominion were to pass with them? What, if succession were decreed to the house of Talaos and not to that of Polynices? Then the long patience at Aegialeia and the hated marriage would be fully rewarded. As the gates of Argos had opened before her, so now the way seemed to lie clear to Thebes, that the isle of Pelops and the mainland might be united. She lost herself in the vision and hardly heard the breathing of the sleeper.

II

In the morning Amphiaraos was not to be found. He had left the temple at evening, greatly grieved and distressed by sacrifices which he had

performed alone. He had said nothing of their purport and had not spoken of a journey. Though withdrawn from affairs of state, he was necessary to decision in so great a matter. Eriphyle suspected whither he had betaken himself, but she held her peace, believing that he had hidden with a purpose. His forecast of the event must have been unfavourable. Without him nothing could be done. The strangers might tire of waiting and seek other allies; if he were brought to face them, he might fail to persuade them or Adrastos that they were rushing on ruin, and then he would be bound by the compact to leave the decision to Eriphyle. Undiscovered, he frustrated the scheme; and this she divined to be his purpose. Discovery was useless, unless she was willing to gainsay him and to enlist him against his will. And for this, seeing the wisdom of his prophecy, she was not ready.

She came from the temple deep in thought; but Alcmaeon was unceasing in his questionings about the guests and about Thebes and the chariot and why they had killed the boar, which he confused with the boar of Calydon, and whether his mother would not get a boar and a lion to put into her chariot to drive to Thebes. His little brother, Amphilochos, and his cousin, Aegialeus, now echoed these questions and wanted the whole story, which Alcmaeon knew, told to them also. She could have handed them to the nurse; but her close affection for

Alcmaeon, whom she thought more like Talaos, whereas Amphilochos was more like Amphiaraos, kept her patient till he was put to bed. There she left him to fall asleep by himself, that she might at last determine her action.

III

And he did not fall asleep. The door had been left open, and in the dark he heard heavy steps. A figure passed, bearing in its hand a loop of light. Mistaking the door, it paused for a moment; and, by the light from the loop, Alcmaeon recognized the lion-man. Then there was a sound of words from his mother's room which he could hear but could not understand, and, after these, the heavy steps again down the corridor, but no light.

Those words which he could not catch were Alcmaeon's fate. Polynices, with the shadow of injury on his handsome brow, stood before Eriphyle seated, and pleaded with her, speaking as she had spoken to him at Aegialeia of the death of her father, but with that strong self-confidence, then ungrown in her, which she most admired in men and missed in the gentleness of Amphiaraos. For wrongs she cared little (else she could not have married him), but much for undefeated energy and for that stubbornness and insistence on reconquest which gave Polynices his assurance. And

in his hand he held the assurance of the gods, the necklace of glory now to be her possession. As he unfolded his plans, telling the number of his supporters, the ways of advance, the villages whose chiefs were ready to rise against Eteocles, the certainty of success, and the fame and power which would ensue to Argos, as he bent over her with gallant deference and soft impetrant eyes, she was released from the long strain of alternate discouragement and determination, the long patience in the endeavour to quicken Adrastos or persuade Amphiaraos, the double labour of accomplishing through them what she would have done and what Polynices would have done without a word from her. She needed help more than her help was needed ; and, when the prince, thanking her for her promise, left her with a stately salute, she threw herself on her bed and sobbed in thankfulness for that there was such a man and that he was gone, since she would have forgotten her queenliness for him. Then she lifted her eyes and the circlet sparkled through her tears as a wreath of victory.

IV

At dawn she stood by Alcmaeon's bed.

" You are to come with me," she said.

Two mules were ready, and slowly they climbed up tracks which were more like torrent-beds, and

were in fact torrents in the rainy season. No muleteers accompanied them. Eriphyle led the way to a stone hut, which Alcmaeon remembered: he had been there once with his father. Mother and son dismounted to eat bread and cakes, and meanwhile she roused his memory. Whither had he followed his father beyond the hut?

"To a big rock."

Could he find the way again?

The boy, pleased with the adventure and with his own importance as guide, bethought himself. The path (he remembered) led straight from the door of the hut; they had stopped to pick hazel-nuts; beyond the hazel bushes there was a great dark pine wood, and beyond the wood the rock.

They left the mules and followed the path to the hazel-bushes. Thence they could see the pine wood, but far away, so that Alcmaeon was tired when they reached it. Nevertheless his mother pushed on. In the wood they lost their way; there was no track over the needles; but Eriphyle hoped to catch sight of the rock when they should be again in the open. She was disappointed. They came out on a high pasture, tinkling with goat-bells; nothing beyond but tree-tops and hills. They might have discovered the goat-herd and asked him; but Eriphyle would not; she skirted the pasture and so came round about upon another path. Alcmaeon seemed to remember this or at least a brook and a bridge to which it might lead, for it led down

hill. The brook and the bridge were indeed there, but, on the other side, three paths. They sat by the brook not knowing what to do, Alcmaeon crying to go home; but she checked him, and he knew her will. It was a lonely place and quiet; even the sound of the goat-bells could no longer be heard; but, through the silence, a deep and solemn cry, faint by reason of distance, reached them, a voice like that of Amphiaraos, but more like a wounded beast. Guided by the sound, they threaded the forest to an open sward spread before a rock crowned with ivy. From within the rock proceeded the voice.

Alcmaeon remembered vaguely in after-years an agony of supplication and no more. His father returned with them.

V

During the nine years of preparation for the attack on Thebes, Alcmaeon passed from childhood to youth, from his seventh to his sixteenth year. The first half of that time was controlled by his mother. He lived in her rooms with his younger playmates, Amphilochos and Aegialeus, and was taken out by her or by a slave, whom she had brought from Aegialeia. These women told him tales of castles and knights and of the great vessel in which Talaos had travelled over the sea to the strange land of the Sun-god's child, how Jason,

exiled like Polynices, had sown in the desolate East the teeth of the dragon slain by Cadmos in Thebes, and how a crop of armed men had sprung from these seeds in Colchis as in the home of Polynices; for Polynices was descended from one of these earth-born warriors, the offspring of his own land; and, when a son, Thersandros, was born to him of Argeia and on the babe's arm appeared the birth-mark of a lance as on all of the dragon's descent, Alcmaeon was shamed because his own body bore no such sign of honour. When he heard of the high Cadmeian palace, which he imagined glittering with gold and outshining the silvery heights of Parnassus across the plain, he envied the nursling his inheritance and was consoled only by his mother's assurance that the lion-man and the boar-man were to bring the Argives into Thebes and to win dominion and glory for the house of Talaos. In comparison with Thebes, all that he saw around him and all that he heard of his uncle's former kingdom of Aegialeia seemed slight. His uncle had passed from a lesser realm to Argos; from Argos he should pass to Thebes; for Alcmaeon did not doubt that, wherever he was, he would occupy the throne by a natural precedence, whatever rights might otherwise belong to the sons of the land. Eriphyle had not shrunk from relating to him the conflict wherein his father had slain her father. To Alcmaeon battle and slaughter were not then terrible; he had never seen death, and wondered, with some

disappointment, that Polynices and his men were not wounded when they returned from their exercises and marches. Talaos had fought with Amphiaraos and had been conquered; but, in the end, his son, Adrastos, had returned in triumph to share the throne of Amphiaraos. So Jason, dispossessed of Iolcos, might have established himself at Corinth but for the machinations of Medea. She, who had betrayed her father to win a lover, at last betrayed the hero himself, not preferring his honour and the kingdom offered to him, which would have rewarded his prowess and atoned for his exile, but considering only how she might keep him to herself. She was a witch and a barbarian. Like her, Stheneboea had betrayed Bellerophon; but this was to be expected from that strange family of Tiryns, which even now was jealous of his uncle's rule. Far different was his mother, so loyal to men, almost a man herself. Among women Atalanta was his favourite; and often would he ask to hear of her. Her father had left her on the mountains when she was born, because he desired sons, not daughters. A she-bear, whose cubs had been killed by huntsmen, found her and suckled her, and, when she was weaned, the huntsmen took her and cared for her; but after a time she left them, and they saw her rarely, speeding like a shooting star over the hill-side and vanishing in the bushes; for she was so swift that none could escape her and that she could herself escape from

all. She lived in a cave in the midst of a cliff. Hardly could you reach it along a narrow shelf; but before it there was a broad space, whereon grew flowers and fruit watered by a brook which ran from the cave and fell over the edge to the chasm below. She wore little and was browned to a man's colour by the sun; she slept on the hides of wild beasts, and her yellow hair mixed with their tawny fur. She would endure no man and was feared of every man. Only the centaurs, Hyllaeus and Rhoecus, dared to approach her as suitors; but she saw them from her height, and shot them afar. Yet she had a son of unknown fatherhood or fatherless, like her only, and most like in his freedom, for he escaped from her to live his own life, and to join the band against Thebes.

He was the youngest of the seven chiefs, the flower of their pride, the glint of their armour. None could exceed him in swiftness of foot nor in sureness of eye and hand. When his shaft lodged in a distant mark, a shout went up from the army; and its report, reaching Atalanta in her wilds, told her with whom she would have to combat to recover him. Yet he was good to Alcmaeon, just emerged from his mother's arms to join the exercises of the youngest lads, high-spirited, but unpractised; him he would teach to ride, to wrestle, and to box, and even take him in the chariot of Adrastos to scud over the plain behind the horse, Arion, which till then none

but Adrastos could control, tossing his golden mane like the waves of his father Poseidon, gentle to a delicate hand, but wild, if held amiss. There was nothing that Parthenopaeos could not do, and to him Alcmaeon turned at every moment of the day; of him were his last thoughts at night. Aegialeus and Amphilochos were forgotten. Alcmaeon was abroad from dawn to evening. His mother and the children saw him only from the banks of the running-ground; yet Eriphyle rejoiced.

VI

Nevertheless in all this there was a shadow. Amphiaraos moved about sadly, avoiding his home. When he came, he exchanged but few words with his wife. His son did not admire him, but looked on him as a living shade. Dark eyes, heavy hair, a full beard, and the dress of an augur, what had this to compare with Parthenopaeos? When he passed the field, Alcmaeon's eyes turned to seek out a spot of blue, his mother's colour, often to be seen between two spots of orange, under a distant tree, and his heart lightened; but sometimes there was but one orange spot; and then Alcmaeon knew that he was safe from the dark look; for Amphilochos now followed the augur to his woodland shrines, slept in caves, and listened if he might understand the birds. This ghostly

life was nothing to the worshipper of Parthenopaeos; and Eriphyle fostered his revulsion by her words. They were few; but it was enough to tell him that the priests condemned the gathering of the chiefs against Thebes to kindle in him a contrary desire: that his friends should by deeds approve their cause against the discouragement of sinister omens. Yet he knew that his place was by his father's side, and, on the last day, he could not disobey the command to be present at the secret sacrifice performed by Amphiaraos after the public propitiation. Then it was that the high-priest should learn whether the gods were appeased.

The people streamed out of the temple. Father and son were left alone. Alcmaeon held the spits and the brazen basket of meal; Amphiaraos the hatchet. But, as if arrested by a call, he laid it on the altar and turned about, standing upright and looking straight before him over his son's head, his face like the face of the dead. Alcmaeon saw that the spirit of prophecy was upon him, that he was aware of nought save what the gods revealed to his mind. Clouds and shadows chased over his features, and then the great eyes would lighten with love and loyalty to fate and to the great purpose of Zeus. At last, with solemn agitation and difficult self-control, he spoke these words to his eldest-born:

"It is useless. Nought can avert our ruin. When thou art called to avenge my death on the

sons of the Thebans, come to me and I will tell thee of another vengeance."

VII

A year passed and all was changed at Argos. Amphiaraos had been received alive into the earth at Harma; the body of Tydeus lay by the Chalcidian road; Polynices with Eteocles before the gate where they fought and fell; Hippomedon under the mound heaped for the rest, and with them the fair head of Parthenopaeos; only Adrastos had returned and he in flight, saved by Arion. A grim quiet and exhaustion pervaded the city.

Alcmaeon was now the eldest prince of the Argive family, second only to Adrastos and destined to be king by whatever right his father might not in his piety have resigned. He was only sixteen, but seemed to himself far older, and, with this sense of a maturity gained, he lost his early scorn of the immaturity of Aegialeus, now looking to him as he had looked to Parthenopaeos. Soon the elder was to discover what Parthenopaeos had discovered before him, the wisdom of the younger. Meanwhile he discovered it in Amphilochos.

Amphilochos at the age of fourteen had passed, not into the running-ground, but into the temples, consecrating himself for life to the office which his father had held before him. He was not

admitted thereto without reason. He had been found asleep one morning in a wood, and, when he awoke, babbled in strange language of strange lands and of the doings of distant men. He said that he had not been asleep at all, that serpents had been about him, licking the hollows of his ears delicately with their slender, rough tongues, and that, when they were gone, the birds sang, and he understood the speech of these far travellers in the air. After a time his reports were confirmed by sailors and merchantmen, surprised to find their tidings already known; and then the augurs doubted not that the gift of Melampus had descended to the fourth generation, and they trusted Amphilochos not only for things human, but also for the secrets of such gods as passed through the air in converse heard only of birds. It remained for him to learn to read the entrails of dying beasts and the rules of purgation and of sacrifices. Nevertheless this could be left to others, while he was sent forth to discover what none other could hear in haunts of which his fellows knew not. By divine impulse he found the rock beneath the ivy, where Dionysos, his father's god, revealed to the son the destinies of Thebes, not clearly at first, but overshadowing his boy-priest and transforming his mind into his own likeness. And with Dionysos came rarely an awful shadow, which spoke not, for he had uttered to his first-born so much as youth could bear, and should speak a second time more plainly

but only to him; yet he would behold Amphilochos.

With his brother Alcmaeon lived in a supernatural world, not less sombre than this, more terrible indeed, amid the smell of sacrificial blood and the appeasement of angered deities and of heroes slain, but grander in power, and superior to the arrogance of a Niobe or of a Tityos, a world which mortals could not touch, but whose resentment they might provoke to descend in vengeance alike on the guilty and on the innocent, on Eteocles and on Polynices, on Capaneus and on Parthenopaeos.

Alcmaeon had awakened from his early dreams; the kingdom of Thebes had not been won; the glory of arms was overlaid with silence and the dust of the dead. He had lost many of his friends. The disappointment of survivors, the memory of his father's prophecy, the daily life amid the ruin which his father had foreseen—all this drove him to question the simple faith which he had hitherto held in the victory of manhood; it should yield to knowledge of the higher purpose of the gods, to his father's faith, to the mantic distrust of men. For Amphiaraos the earth had opened, struck by the lightning of Zeus that he might not suffer death; and, standing upright, he had driven his horses into Hades; now, at Oropos in the land of Psophis, his oracle was revered as that of a holy god. Surely in the dark look was divine counsel, and in the confidence of Eriphyle a snare.

The proof of divinity was indisputable; it cast a doubt over daylight; sunshine was the less clear and mountains were the less sure since the depths had spoken. But to the youth of Alcmaeon they did not speak with the voice of discouragement. In him the mind of Amphiaraos was mixed with the high spirit inherited from Eriphyle. He listened to Amphilochos; but his task was other: he was to be king.

VIII

He was now within a year of his accession, and Eriphyle began to prepare him for his office, teaching him, so far as she might, the business which would be his when of age. She took him with her on her progress through the villages which belonged to the house of Melampus, acquainted him with their crops and contributions and with the men who collected her dues, which were to become her son's. Hitherto Alcmaeon had lived in Argos with the few nobles away from the peasants; now he saw the humblest life and whence the wealth of the family was drawn. The villagers paid in kind; and many of them could not now pay because their men-folk had been killed in the war. These never suffered at the hands of Eriphyle. Consequently the returns were slight and insistence greater in other cases.

One sunny afternoon their jolting wagon (more splendidly figured than those of the country-folk, but otherwise like, since such only could pass the lanes, narrow, crooked, and stony) stopped before a cottage at the foot of a vineyard. A burly, shock-haired, puzzle-faced youth answered their call, but was soon set aside by an old woman, who, emerging from the door, directed him to attend to the mule. She conducted Eriphyle into the room; and Alcmaeon was left to a young girl who had been eyeing him with a look of admiration and fear. He asked to see the vineyard and the wine-press.

"We have no wine-press," she said. "That is the trouble. We have to go to Symmachos; he has a wine-press. We have to bring the grapes to him and take the wine which he gives us. He can give us what he likes. We can keep it better than he, for we have the old tomb. He sometimes gives us his to keep."

Alcmaeon desired to see the butts. She showed him the entrance, but refused to follow him.

"Not down there; not down there," she said, with a look of fear. Was she afraid of the dead in the lofty chamber dimly lighted from the top?

Alcmaeon, who had no purpose in the exploration, returned soon. He found her seated on the wall of the approach to the tomb, her hair fallen over her cheeks. He could not help saying: "Are you sad?" with that honest simplicity of boyhood which breaks down the barriers of reserve.

" Father died before the war," she said. " My brother cannot fend for us as he did. The vineyard runs wild ; and it used to be the best. We are in the hands of Symmachos, who wants it and us. The queen was persuaded to leave us another year ; but the year is past, and things are no better. She will give it to Symmachos now for all my mother can say ; and what shall I do ? "

She began to cry ; and Alcmaeon put his arms around her to comfort her ; but she sprang like a frightened deer away from him and ran into the house.

Eriphyle was calling from the wagon. Alcmaeon mounted it and took the reins.

" Those people are fools," said she. " Gnathon is not like his father. Symmachos had better manage for them. I have told them so, and that they must leave, if they will not have him. The land runs to waste."

Alcmaeon would not speak. Inwardly he resolved to come again alone to enquire further. Eriphyle continued :

" I suppose that you liked Chryso and that she has fooled you."

He had been seen, then, from the cottage. He bridled but answered nothing.

IX

The cottage was far from Argos ; but Alcmaeon crept forth one morning early and on his pony

accomplished the journey by noon. He felt that first flush of gallantry which brings beauty to every countryside, and was sure of his welcome. Then he must see Symmachos and understand the matter beyond a peradventure. But at the cottage he met a rebuff. The surly son would not admit him.

" Not though you are prince of Argos shall you meddle with my sister. I know the reason of your coming."

Of what use to see Symmachos? The boy returned weary, leading a weary pony.

Now he must do what he would not; there was no other way.

He spoke to his mother.

She would not listen.

" Of course you care for the girl. It is natural at your age."

Shortly news came that Symmachos was dead. Thereupon the truth became known to all. For long he had been seeking possession of Chryso, and had threatened to drive out the family, if she would not yield. He had lured her once into the tomb, but she had escaped. After the queen's visit the mother had consented, and Symmachos, emboldened, had tried force; but the sullen and suspicious brother, on the watch, had clubbed him.

The memory of this sank deep into Alcmaeon's mind as if it had been due to some failure of his own.

X

His accession brought him fuller knowledge of his kingdom. He seemed to have lived in a dark hut before and now to have thrust out his arms and struck its walls down. He would not take his mother when he made a progress, lest people should not speak to him freely. They feared him even alone. His build was the commanding build of Talaos, whom they remembered, his port majestic like his mother's, the lines of his face stern, and his eyes piercing save when they melted to a liquid softness never seen even in the eyes of Polynices.

He found confirmation of his anxieties, confirmation so abundant that he returned from his journeys sick at heart. Everywhere men like Symmachos held possession of the people. Themselves escaping the levies, and covering over the matter with false returns, they had pleased the queen with gifts. They had then lent of their store to the people, who, unable to repay till harvest and often not then, became their bondsmen. Their exactions nearly exceeded the supplies; and little was left even to those who tilled the richest land.

Alcmaeon visited Cruni, a poor hamlet under the Heraeum. A boy looked up from the gutter where he was playing. He was squint-eyed; and there was a sore on his eyebrow. Old women

stopped his horse with an appeal for abatement of dues. Along a wall sheltered from the wind ragged men were seated in a row endeavouring to get what warmth they could from a winter sun. These were too prudent to protest, lest the extortioner should fall on them for more labour, but they rose respectfully and bared the scars which they had received during the war. A girl's eyes seemed to say :

" You have everything and I nothing."

When the Symmachos of the place had made his report of tributes, false, Alcmaeon was sure, for it contained much from himself, he placed before the king a golden cup as his own free gift. A golden cup from this place where the people could only contrive to live in wretchedness ! Alcmaeon refused it.

" It is for the queen," was the answer.

Alcmaeon took the cup and ascended to the temple. Many followed him, and, when he was within, they murmured, gathering about the door.

" What do they say ? " he asked.

" They say that you have come to filch from the treasure and that the anger of the goddess will fall upon them."

Alcmaeon came to the steps, holding the cup in his hands.

They fell back ; but one shouted :

" We will not have the son of Polynices to reign over us."

Alcmaeon's cheeks coloured with the insult; but what must be their misery to dare him!

"My people," he said, "I come to take nothing from you; there shall be no levy. I take nothing from the goddess, but bring this cup to her. To you I restore the rule of Amphiaraos, my father."

XI

This, then, was the glory of the Talaionids (so he pondered on his homeward journey), this his mother's pride; her golden vessels and soft raiment were given to her by the poor wretches who bore the wounds of her ambition; she was a beggar at their doors; her splendour shrunk to poverty; her soul shrivelled to their likeness; she left a track of death and disease on her royal way.

At the door of the palace he passed a young man leaving it whose face was unknown to him. It would never have occurred to him before to enquire the name of a stranger save from his mother, but now he hesitated in the doorway after the formal salute. The young man, in answer to his look, explained that he was Bycelos, the son of Symmachos.

"I came to thank the queen. She has done me justice and confirmed me in the possession of the vineyards."

"Do Gnathon and Chryso remain in their cottage?"

"Gnathon? Do you not know? I revenged my father's death on him."

"He is dead?"

"He is dead, my lord."

For the moment Alcmaeon could not grasp the fact. He seemed still to see the puzzle-headed boy alive on the threshold of his hut, rough-spoken, violent, unable to defend his sister save in the simplest way. In confusion he bowed and passed into his mother's chamber.

She was lifting the folds of a costly silk, blue with a fine border of gold, such as used to delight him in his innocence.

"It is the gift of Bycelos," he said.

"Yes," she replied, looking up in surprise at his sharp certainty.

"To atone for bloodshed."

Her eyes flashed with anger.

"He avenged his father. I hope that you would have done the same." This with a trace of scorn, as if Alcmaeon might not be man enough.

"And Chryso?"

"I do not know what has happened to her. It is your affair."

Alcmaeon left the room.

His pony could bear no more. He made his way through the night on a slow mule—not too slow, since he must not arrive before morning. The country was dangerous, for darkness unleashed

all secret purposes over the land ; but others had more to fear than he. Figures of men became silent, as he approached, or hid by the wayside. Outside the villages there were whispers and loose garments fluttering by the wall.

At dawn he reached the vineyards.

Women were carrying their tall two-handled water-vessels on their heads to the town well to fetch water for the day. The shutters of the cottage were closed. He waited for them to open. Standing there, he saw Chryso coming from the well. Her steps were directed to the neighbouring house. Alcmaeon barred her way.

" Do you live there ? With Bycelos ? "

" I had to. There was no other place for me without Gnathon."

Alcmaeon understood.

" Will you forgive us ? " he said.

" It is not you. I knew that it was never you. It was—it was she, the queen."

Alcmaeon did not speak to his mother of the lot of Chryso. She might not care (had she not endured the like ?) and, if she did care, naught could be done by her that could not now be done by himself. He disliked to speak to her—to confide his own thoughts to her on any matter. It irked him that he must consult her so much on affairs of state ; but she only could persuade Adrastos ; and, if he were not persuaded to Alcmaeon's opinion, Alcmaeon must yield to his ; for, without such concessions, division would,

in the end, become rupture and civil strife. If Eriphyle were in disagreement with Alcmaeon, she could counter him as effectually as if she were possessed of power of arbitrament between him and Adrastos. It distressed him to come to her, —that he could not otherwise govern the city; for he must hide his mind when it was not hers, watching her when she helped him, mistrustful when she trusted him. To her stateliness all questions were affairs of state; to him they were not. Yet she had been versed in them from youth; she was waywise; and often, instead of asking her to persuade Adrastos, he was persuaded by her judgment.

XII

The second attack on Thebes was to take place when Thersandros, the son of Polynices, should reach his eighteenth year, the age at which he could claim his kingdom against Laodamas, the son of Eteocles. In Thersandros the sense of wrong which had graced the dark eyes of Polynices showed as a sullen hostility and rancour. Reverence for his father became a blind determination and intolerance of opposition. The second attack should be made whatever the auguries. The augurs had prophesied truly concerning the failure of the first, but had they not controlled the event? Was not Amphiaraos a cousin of the Theban prophet, Tiresias? Was

he not a servant of the Theban god, Dionysos? Perhaps he had communicated with the enemy, using the birds for his messengers; had he not fled unwounded before Periclymenos and so given the signal of flight to the host? And, if his prophecy had been fulfilled, was it not by chance? Argos had failed; it was the fortune of war; but had Amphiaraos really foreseen the event? and were we now to be led by his son? was the cloudy lore of a dreamy stripling to prevail? was he, by the arguments of quivering entrails and the strange cries of wildfowl, to override the just judgment of men concerning favourable times and seasons, to hamstring their vigour and to rule the state? did justice count for naught with Zeus, or the blood of Argeia with Argives?

Thersandros was seconded by Eriphyle, to whom the defeat of her husband and of her brother was an intolerable insult and their flight a shame to be removed only by victory. Adrastos was bound thereby to the sons of the Seven in vengeance. Alcmaeon was expected to espouse their cause. He began to hate the clamant youth.

On a sad afternoon of autumn, warm but cloudy, he came across Aegialeus and Thersandros in rapid conversation, Aegialeus with his arm on the neck of Thersandros. He did not hear what they were saying; but the sight made him angry. With the authority of an elder he separated them and took Aegialeus with him, Thersandros darting a sharp glance at their backs. Thereafter Aegialeus

broke with Thersandros and accompanied Alcmaeon wherever he went, eating with cottagers and deserting his fellows for the common people. Thus he became acquainted with them and with their needs according to the desire of Alcmaeon, but also thereby the leadership of both was increased: if they went to war, the people would follow; if not, they would not follow Adrastos, but would rise against him.

Aegialeus was a quiet lad, not eager, not martial, almost submissive; yet in his few words there lurked assurance of claims not asserted but assumed, as if with royal blood he had inherited a right judgment. Alcmaeon, to whom he listened, listened yet more to him, finding in his boyish sayings proofs of natural wisdom and prudence. Was it fancy or was it truth that the elements of the last decision lay in the soul of this lad? The following years vouched for its truth. Into that mind were cast, as into a balance, all such facts and knowledge, human and divine, as lay to hand; and quietly his thought marked the right values. This quietness was wonderful in Alcmaeon's eyes. He loved Aegialeus as better than himself because free from the restlessness of speculation or of action, and as having his stay and centre in himself. He enfolded the boy with passionate yearning. Should he accomplish nothing in his own life, he would yet have seen that wise and benignant sanity; and could he accomplish aught for Aegialeus, it were much, though he still looked

beyond—to heights and ventures unknown. In truth Aegialeus did well to listen to Alcmaeon, who was superior, not only in years, but in stretch and sweep of ambition, a high-flying falcon, breasting all the gusts of air, though happiest when called home.

XIII

Sometimes the two friends would don the dress of peasants and sit unknown in the corners of inns or under a tree where the villagers assembled to make merry, hearing much that would not have been told to them in their proper persons.

Talaos had been hated for his relentless exactions, Amphiaraos loved for his expulsion of Talaos. If only he had retained control! The return of Adrastos had been unwelcome; the queen was an evil genius propitiated by the gifts of those who, to secure them, despoiled the people; the disastrous war had been her doing; she had been warned by her husband, but she cared no more for him than for the poor; a goat-herd had tracked her to a rock in the mountains, where she had discovered Amphiaraos and brought him to his death; she had not sorrowed for him nor continued long in mourning, but soon appeared in splendour, wearing the necklace that glowed in the dark, booty perhaps obtained by sacrilege from some Boeotian temple. Some said that it

was the necklace which Harmonia had worn on her wedding-day and that Polynices had given it to the queen as the price of her husband's blood. Proudly she disregarded all blame as she had disregarded all forecasts; she would sacrifice all men to the victory of her house; it was strange that Aegialeus was alive, for had she not a son, Alcmaeon? He was a noble youth, but likely to be led by his mother as Aegialeus by his father; and the father was led by the queen. Without her the two princes would have protected the land; for the king alone could not have resisted them.

The two lads listened with open ears; but Alcmaeon with deeper understanding, for memories came back to him, his visit to the rock, the loop of light passing along the corridor, his father's command; and these memories fell in with the suspicions of the people. He had not put these things together before. His mother's pride, the necklace, had been only part of her customary grandeur, part of his pride in her, that she was not as common women, but ever stately in dress as in all else, in her regal manner, in her unfailing calm. Now all combined in one accusation; but he would not admit it to himself, and Aegialeus said nothing.

They had wandered far. Yet Alcmaeon proposed that they should climb to the Pontine castle of Demophon overlooking Lerna. Aegialeus was surprised. He had heard much of this cousin

as a moody lord visited by few, but had seen him little in Argos.

"Are you afraid to appear at his house in these clothes?" said Alcmaeon.

"He will receive me," said Aegialeus.

The tone and the mention of himself only were characteristic of the quiet, solitary dignity of the boy. Alcmaeon answered:

"Perhaps he will receive me too."

XIV

They led their horses up the steep, and, passing through the megaron, found Demophon on a small terrace, which overlooked the vale. Demophon, sad and independent since the death of his father, Hippomedon, at Thebes, felt the compliment of the visit of the princes and pleasure in the sight of two strong lads, his kinsmen, fresh-hearted and open-minded, likely perhaps to be his helpers in the restoration of Argos sorely tried by the war. Alcmaeon had not come without a purpose. He knew that Hippomedon had sided with Amphiaraos and that the son of Hippomedon, who showed himself so rarely in the neighbourhood of Adrastos, had inherited the difference. He would have heard much of the beginning of hostilities, and, caring nought for the palace tradition, so jealously guarded by Eriphyle, might

speak his mind as freely as the people, but with more justice.

Demophon related the story. His father had numbered himself with the Seven for loyalty's sake, but without hope. He would not be counted with Agamemnon and Menelaos, those clever dastards, who foresaw the end and that they had nothing to gain.

"My father went because Amphiaraos went, and, like Amphiaraos, he blamed—but I must not speak thus to you," he broke off.

"Speak," said Alcmaeon. "He blamed my mother for the war."

"Yes," said Demophon. "She had the power of arbitrament."

"But how could she have power against my father and my uncle?" said Aegialeus. "A woman's will should not hold against two kings."

"Your father," replied Demophon, "desired the war, or else he was decided by the queen, according to his habit. She had the power of arbitrament between her brother and her husband because Amphiaraos gave it to her when she returned to him from Aegialeia."

"I have heard this," said Alcmaeon, "but why was it given?"

"You see the castle of those mad people across the bay, for Melampus cured only the great-aunts; there is madness in the blood; Capaneus was mad; they are all mad; by the water the castle of Nauplios, who can close the harbour and

shut us off from the sea; over yonder the tower of the refugees from Pisa, held by the cowardly schemers who would not join the Seven. That family succeeds by marriage. So Pelops began; so his sons got Mycenae, sending out Eurystheus to fight and retaining the kingdom. You will see —one of them will be a suitor for Helen of Sparta. They threaten the approach from Isthmos. Adrastos had grown strong in Aegialeia, and, if he advanced, could have raised all these chiefs of Argolis against your city, except my father. Amphiaraos asked him for counsel; and he told me what passed. He found your father oldened. His auguries had weakened his desires. My father said that he spoke of the tomb of Proetos and Acrisios down there in the plain, how those brothers had quarrelled from the womb, though only to possess the same little plot of ground in death. I thought of it when I heard how the smoke from the pyre of Eteocles and Polynices parted and went up to heaven in two columns. So it has ever been in this land. I live here and mix with no one; and my people are content."

He paused and forgot his hearers, leaning on his elbows and gazing over the gulf.

"But this strange agreement," said Alcmaeon.

"Your father had no quarrel with Adrastos. He had always loved your mother. She offered to blot out the memory of her father's death and to seal the peace with the gift of herself, if only, when the kings should be divided in counsel, the

voice of the dead might speak through her. You know that she has ever thought herself the only proper child of Talaos; and, if my father was right, she is. He counselled the pact, knowing our neighbours and the danger. Your father, I suppose, trusted Eriphyle."

"He was wrong," said Aegialeus after they had left the castle. And Alcmaeon did not defend his mother.

XV

He found her for the first time disquieted. Some bad news must have reached her. She was fretful, and welcomed him with a tenderness to which he was not accustomed; for, since he had become a man and destined commander of the host, it had pleased her to treat him with distant reverence even when advising him. She no longer enquired of his doings; his absences she attributed to pleasures of youth, his reserve to preoccupations of state; she liked an impatient authority which he sometimes exercised, and did not discern therein the revolt of his mind. Men should be thus; her father had been thus, and Amphiaraos had not been thus. She had dreaded her husband's gravity; she trusted her son's spirit. To him, now the head of the family, all matters to which he would listen should be brought, and to him only could she confide what

troubled her,—troubled her so much that she could not keep it to herself. She did not know his mood and the thoughts which preoccupied him. In the twilight she had not seen his face, the face of a watchman peering through gloom for an enemy. She unburdened herself without a suspicion of discord; she let slip over him the confusion of her vexations. Alcmaeon had but to listen and to disentangle the mesh. At first she spoke of what had passed in his absence, of quarrels between the chiefs, of the weakness of Adrastos, of delayed orders, contrary and ineffectual determinations. Then she broke out.

Would this never come to an end? Adrastos had lost all power of decision, all authority, all control. For this she had sacrificed herself: that the kingdom of her father should pass into her brother's hands; for this she had married: that brother and husband might flee from the Thebans. Yet, since the thunderbolt of Zeus, which had struck Capaneus headlong from the wall of Thebes, had scattered a divine panic in all hearts, the Argives would still have been ruled by the only king left to them, if he could rule. This had been his opportunity; but he was feeble; there was no hope. If only the crown were to pass at his death to Alcmaeon! but it would belong equally to that puny Aegialeus, who, with his ridiculous mock majesty, was no better than his father. And now, as if Aegialeus were not enough, a second son had that day been born to Adrastos.

Alcmaeon would serve others, or be thwarted by others, all the days of his life. It was better when she could hope that either he or Aegialeus would die before Thebes, for the augurs had said that one of the seven chiefs would die. Then her son would be sole king, or, at least, would not have lived to be coupled with Aegialeus. But now there was a second bar to the monarchy, the new-born Cyanippos. She had struggled her life long for the descent of Talaos, had given up all that a woman could desire to reinstate his blood. She had been wrong. There was none in his family to take his place; there was none, and there would be none, fit to succeed him. "We who are older consider these things royally, not to whom they happen. You are my son, but not for that would I see you king. I have failed in my brother; I might have succeeded in you; but now you must abase yourself either before Aegialeus or the babe. Would that I had never borne you to see you thus set aside! I fear the sons of Atreus; I fear Demophon and Nauplios. My husband surrendered to my brother. Who knows to whom Argos will be surrendered by my brother's children?

And now this war. You are to be made commander in a few days, if you will. You are to toil for three years till the attack shall be ready. Then you are perhaps to die that Thersandros may reign at Thebes and Aegialeus and Cyanippos here. You are dispossessed in advance. Refuse

the command. We strive to no purpose. We are not acknowledged. All that I have done for this people has earned me only hate. Men are weaker than women."

Alcmaeon listened; and his thoughts were tossed from side to side, as pebbles in a torrent, by her words and by the words of Demophon, by her foiled ambition, by his peace and despair.

XVI

One thing was clear. He must see Amphilochos. She had said that one of the chiefs was to fall before Thebes. Could it be Aegialeus?

He climbed the stony hill beyond the last cottages. As he approached the temple, its light was extinguished. Amphilochos was closing the door. He said that he had given the prediction to Adrastos. If the attack were made, one of the chiefs would fall before Thebes; he knew not which, save that it was not to be Alcmaeon; victory was assured, if Alcmaeon should lead; otherwise all was uncertain; "but," he added, "I told him nothing of yourself, not that your life was safe, not that victory was in your hands. These truths are for yourself or for those to whom you may impart them, that you may be master. This command I received in the rock under witness of the dead whom Zeus loveth."

XVII

Alcmaeon returned to his room to ponder.

That he might be master: this was his father's message; this was his mother's desire; but there was a world between them.

His mother centred her hope in him; she believed in him; she confided in him. He had doubted this of late; Thersandros was so much about her. He had taken Alcmaeon's place, doing the many services which Alcmaeon in his youth had performed with joy and devotion; the son could hardly be alone with his mother; he found himself forestalled, welcomed against his will by two. He had not been wholly displeased, dreading his own confidences, the words which might have escaped his lips, the thoughts which his mother should not know; if Thersandros was before him, he had an excuse for retirement after he had listened for a while, saying little. But he was jealous of the influence of Thersandros. As he suspected the mind of Eriphyle in the speech of Adrastos, so he suspected the mind of Thersandros in the speech of Eriphyle. The youth was such as she loved. Of what use to deliberate for the best, if he was to be met by this forward, insistent, unbridled will?

Yet now she was ready to desert Thersandros for her son. This ambitious mother abandoned all for which she had lived, unless it should make him great. But what was the drift of her thought?

that, if the whole family of her brother were to perish, it were no loss; that the loss would be great to Argos if her son were not sole king, as he could not be without the death of all; this was the royal road to which the dead hand of Talaos pointed. Aegialeus lay across her path; his death would not matter save as a lucky chance in the game which she played with Fate. The birth of Cyanippos loaded the dice against her. This was her thought; this was what she had said. Hence her solicitude for her son, really only a solicitude for his victory. If she had known that he was to conquer in the fight, she would not have dissuaded him from the enterprise, but would have been dazzled by the prospect; it was well that she did not know, for behind that victory lay uncertainty and terror. If he took his place at the head of the army, his father's call to him could not be evaded. He must then learn at Oropos of that other vengeance; against whom but his mother could his father exact vengeance? She had sent him to his grave. Why? to requite him for her father's death? But then the reconciliation was hypocrisy, her marriage a deceit. No; she could not have lived thus. That Talaos might triumph in his seed she had pardoned the death of Talaos. The glory of the race—this was all to her; persons were nothing; she had said it.

Peace was still possible, and with peace there was no call from his father; why else was the

call delayed but that he might rule Argos with clean hands? Peace was the only remedy; and now she desired it. If she had not, Alcmaeon knew that the decision lay with him, that he was master, that the greater part of the people would rise at his word, against Thebes or against Adrastos. And his father was with him, not as his mother, urgent or dissuasive, but confident in his own seed, in the nature which was not that of Talaos, resigning mastery to his son. "This command I received in the rock under witness of the dead whom Zeus loveth."

XVIII

There were steps in the passage. Some one was entering his mother's room. He could hear conversation, excited conversation, but could not make out the words nor the voice of the visitor; it was lower than that of Thersandros. Then the steps came down the corridor. Alcmaeon would have opened the door; but the moonlight fell on it and would show only himself, if he opened it; moreover, the latch would click. He went to the window, hiding himself in the shade of the shutter. The street was still; but a figure moved in the darkness under the opposite houses. Was it Thersandros? The voice might have been the voice of Thersandros—hushed. If it were Thersandros, there would be no reason for suspicion; he came often at that time; but

the thought that it might not be Thersandros let loose a flood of suspicions, and these fell on Thersandros, for, if it was he, he had trodden lightly, he had spoken low. It could be no other; for who else would come at that hour? Why had he come? To persuade Eriphyle? for he would have known her change of mind; he knew more of her mind than Alcmaeon. What plot was in hand? What danger was to be divined? Alcmaeon longed for the counsel of Aegialeus, but feared to be heard opening the door and crossing the passage; and conversation might be heard. If there was a plot, he must not give notice that he suspected it. Reluctantly he threw off his clothes and laid himself in his bed; but he could not sleep. An hour passed. He rose impatient, not knowing what to do, without a purpose; but his hand wandered to the latch. Slowly—slowly, that there might be no sound, he lifted it. Yes; it was clear; the door opened in silence. He crept to the bedside of Aegialeus. He was asleep, his hand out of the coverlet and curling over. There was nothing to do; he must not be wakened; let him take counsel of sleep before he gave it. Alcmaeon watched the lad's face, no quieter in sleep than in waking. Ah, if only the auguries had predicted his own death! For this youth he would have died willingly and triumphed in the thought that he should rule Argos; but to live himself, if Aegialeus should die! that Aegialeus should die to establish Ther-

sandros! Better a thousand times that Polynices should lie by the Theban gate unavenged! Why had he ever come, bringing only disaster to Argos? Alcmaeon's mind went back to that night. From this room he had heard his voice as he was sitting by Aegialeus. He had crept down the passage and had been frightened by the scalp of the lion. He retraced the story; he remembered the lion-man passing the door, the light from the necklace. This night another had passed, perhaps his son, but the door was closed—the door was closed—Alcmaeon could see nothing—it was dark——

When Aegialeus awoke, he was sleeping in the chair; his lids were heavy; he looked old; he stretched himself, wakened by the involuntary exclamation of surprise from the bed.

The two spoke to one another. Alcmaeon related all.

It was Thersandros, Aegialeus said; of course it was Thersandros; it was his hour; but why imagine a meaning in his visit? or in Eriphyle's change of mind? It was a fit of temper, feminine; she would never abandon the war of revenge.

He judged aright, for, when Alcmaeon saw her again, she besought him to disregard all that she had said.

"Glory and dominion will be ours. They are ours already, if I could tell you. Go forth, my son, to conquer."

Yet Amphilochos had not spoken to her. With him that morning the two friends took counsel.

A message had come from Adrastos, who, nothing doubting, only said that Alcmaeon was to take command on the morrow. Alcmaeon could have delayed, but to what purpose, unless he was to decline?

Aegialeus was clear and firm. The enterprise could not be given up without civil strife. They must choose between war against Thebes and war in Argos.

"If you command us, we shall win. If not, Adrastos will prepare to lead the host without you. Your followers will rebel. We shall turn on each other, divided into two camps, headed by two kings. You and my father will fight, as your father with Talaos. You will lead the people, he the chiefs with their forces. Our neighbours will seize the chance of alliance with one or other, hoping to dispossess both. Who knows what will befall us? After victory over Thebes, they will not dare. Argos will be safe. This is certainty; all else is uncertain."

Alcmaeon knew that, with a word about his father's call to Oropus, he could have shaken Aegialeus, now strong in the confidence that his friend would live to rule Argos; had he foreseen what Alcmaeon feared—had he known the command given by Amphiaraos, he might have wavered. The word was not spoken. Alcmaeon would not bring forebodings of his own danger to bear on the decision. He only begged Aegialeus not to come with him, if he should go.

" Where should I be, if not with my people ? " answered Aegialeus.

Amphilochos frowned. Alcmaeon turned to him as to a last refuge.

The young priest sat with his hands crossed on his lap, imperturbable, sad.

" I know nothing," he said, " but what I have told you—save this : that there is a curse upon our house and that expiation must be made for sin."

On the morrow Alcmaeon rode forth to the running-ground in full panoply and took command.

XIX

Morning broke over the conquered city of Thebes. Laodamas lay dead, pierced by the sword-thrust of Alcmaeon, the first to enter the walls ; but the conquest brought him only grief : no victory could atone for the death of Aegialeus, slain by Laodamas. The Theban pyres were lighted ; the feast of the victors was being made ready. Alcmaeon would not await it, but went forth with a bodyguard. At parting he begged Adrastos not to bury Aegialeus in the realm of Thersandros, and to meet him at Megara, whither he would come from Oropus.

At the gate of the precinct he left his men. His name was not announced ; yet the priests fell aside in two ranks as for a bidden guest. The chief

augur administered the lustrations in silence, sacrificed the ram, and spread its fleece for a bed; then he departed.

Alone in the darkness Alcmaeon sobbed for Aegialeus and for fear of the father whom he had never loved and who was now to pronounce sentence over him. He lay as in death; was not his life ended, all that could be called life?

At midnight a figure arose from a well in the courtyard, mounted the steps of the temple and passed through the unopened door. It stood beside Alcmaeon and spoke to him.

"My son" (he remembered the voice from far-off years; and slowly and clearly words which he should never forget followed one another), "she sent me to my death for a bribe; for a bribe she sent thee forth, not knowing that I should preserve thee unto her own death; she will slay the child, if thou suffer her to live—for the robe of dominion and the jewels of glory, the gifts of the stranger and of his son. In her the evil seed of Talaos is perfect. Thou knowest thy task."

Alcmaeon strove in speechless agony to plead with the shade standing over him. His tongue was tied.

"Condemn me not, my father"—this was all that he could utter.

The voice spoke again:

"Thou shalt find no rest save where the sun hath never shone, but among the dead shalt thou have honour."

The dead man was gone. Alcmaeon lay in a swoon.

XX

A stern rider on horseback rode at dawn over the hills into Attica. His men dared not speak to him. He halted; and then they halted without command; when he rode on, they rode on. They passed like a funeral procession through the pines of Deceleia, across the plain, avoiding the citadel of Cecrops, then by the pools and Eleusis along the bay. The mountains lay in the sun; and the straits below them were like a burnished shield; but Alcmaeon looked straight onward, riding to his fate. At the third nightfall they neared Megara. Outside the walls there was a glare of fire, the burning of the body of Adrastos, dead of grief.

Then, seeing the host and that there was none but himself, Alcmaeon spoke, but only to give orders, quiet, brief, peremptory.

So it had happened. His mother's wish had been fulfilled. Naught could threaten his rule, save, after many years, Cyanippos. The wedding glory of Harmonia had brought this power to her house; he could see it in the eyes of all.

He possessed the kingdom and could give it to whom he would, to Cyanippos or to a son of his own. He could command the nobles and the

people. Mycenae would not dare to stir, nor Nauplia. Sthenelos and Demophon were his liegemen, Thersandros his vassal.

But all this was his for one day only, since it had been bought by his ruin; with his ruin Thersandros had bought Thebes; to Thersandros he had been sold; for Thersandros Aegialeus had laid down his life; for Thersandros Adrastos had perished. The arms of Argos, the wealth and strength of Argos had been purchased for a bribe by Thersandros, who now sat in wassail on the Cadmeian height, glorying in the triumph won for him by Argos. The thought enraged Alcmaeon. Of his mother he did not think till the sight in the distance of the city that had once been his home (now he was to be homeless) brought her to mind; but even then his anger did not turn on her, and his mind concerning her was cold and clear. The days when he had been her child nestling in her warm silks, the days when he had been her proud and trustful son, the days of suspicion and doubt, were now old and forgotten. She was a woman, endeavouring to judge as only a man should judge, deceived as only a woman could be deceived, a blind force, a danger unaware of its end.

At the gate he dismounted. The soldiers were to be disbanded in the market-place. He left them to Demophon and turned to the palace. He must not see Amphilochos, lest brother should be implicated with brother. There was none

other to whom he would say farewell. Yes, one. He stole across the court to a sunny room. There in his cradle amid his toys lay Cyanippos, well wrapped about and asleep. One little hand had found its way outward and lay beside his head, curled over, like the hand of Aegialeus. Alcmaeon bent over the child. Here was the only hope. He did not mean to waken him, but his shield clashed against his corslet. The child opened his eyes and crowed with delight. Then in half-shapen sentences he gave Alcmaeon to understand that his nurse would not take him to see the soldiers, but that Alcmaeon must take him at once.

"I cannot," said Alcmaeon. What could he do for the child, now or ever?

Eriphyle was not in her room. The curtains were drawn, as she drew them for her toilet; a vague scent of her garments lingered in the air. Alcmaeon pried about her chamber, setting shame aside, for he must find proof of his father's words, however needless to his own heart. The touch of her dresses was like the touch of her, the blue dress with the golden band.

An old chest stood at the end of the room. He had never seen it open; now he sought for the key—on the beam under the eaves where dainties used to be stored for him above his reach—and among her private things: he must not flinch. Then he saw that the key was in the lock. She must have left it there in haste to meet him in the market-place: the army had hardly been an-

nounced when it arrived. Alcmaeon lifted the lid. There was a glimmer of light through some pattern woven in a coarse canvas; he raised the covering and unfolded the robe for full assurance. The room was flooded with a soft, golden glow, warming the brown rafters, touching to life the colours of the cushions, shining on the armour of Talaos and on the griffins' heads of the brazier; the atmosphere was heady as with sunny wine, but gentle, an Elysian glory and peace. For a moment he looked; then, in fear lest he should be overcome, he folded the garment, laid it away, closed the chest, and retreated to his room.

He sat by the window in shadow, looking along the street toward the market-place. His soldiers passed him, returning to their homes, speaking of the victory and of himself, the favoured of the gods. Familiar voices smote him, the voices of tried men whom he could trust, who trusted him and now looked upon him and Argos and peace as one thing, an enduring safety. Outside there was plain daylight, none in his heart; in the room of Aegialeus there would be vacancy and silence. He listened for a sound in the passage, that passage by which Thersandros and Polynices had brought their gifts in the night, the bribes of dominion and glory, the passage down which he had crept to see the fatal boar and lion which had ravaged his home. There had been doubt and perplexity from the time when Parthenopaeos had left him;

now he saw the plot of his life, simply devised by strangers for their advantage; he saw their cunning and the failure before them of the loyal and wise. Moments passed long as hours, the last of his life as a whole man, the last in which he could at least face his undoing with a clear mind, the last in this room where his confident youth had been deluded, in this home which was a trap. For him henceforth there was no earthly existence; his father had taken his soul.

He heard the step of his mother along the passage, the third of the three, he thought, and the last. She passed into her chamber. He knocked and entered.

Her proud glance met him.

"My son, my hero."

She placed him where she herself had always sat, and took, instead of her seat, the footstool that had been his. Alcmaeon permitted this; he had but one thought; all else had no meaning. She spoke of his victory, of the kingdom that now was his alone, of his spirit and counsel, greater than that of Adrastos and Aegialeus—no word of their death. He sat like a judge, hearing not speaking, admiring this woman, wondering at her steadfastness of purpose, chill, while she worshipped at his feet:

"Henceforth whatever you do is my act; wherever you go I follow."

His thought travelled swiftly: one proof was wanting.

" It were better," he said, " that Cyanippos did not live."

She looked at him, then rose and stood before him, feeling that this was the supreme moment of her life, that at last she faced a king worthy of the power of life and death.

" The task is mine," she answered, " but I needed not your word."

Alcmaeon drew his sword and slew her.

XXI

Where the torrent of the Aroanios discharges into the river Erymanthos there rises a hill topped by the look-outs and bastions of Phegea, which guard the three valleys and the poor village clinging to the slope betwixt the streams. If you come down the glen of the Aroanios, a long narrow path rises before you, leading to a window in the wall by the north-western gate. Here dwelt the village-chief, Phegeus, an old man, worn by the labour of life-long penury, but now resting on the virtue of his two sons, Pronoos, the shifty, and Agenor, the valiant, bearded rustics with lowering, suspicious eyes, fearful of every chance that might threaten their slender and insecure subsistence. These kept the neighbouring folk from rapine; with prompt vengeance they chastised thefts of crops and cattle; the distant pastures and ploughlands were safe. From the hill the villagers descended at morn with their burdened mules in a long line;

at nightfall they left the fields and toiled up the slope to sup and sleep within the walls. The young chiefs would linger, posting their spies, or themselves lying in ambush for marauders in the night.

Phegeus had one daughter, Arsinoe, a maiden unlike her brothers, and, as it seemed, above them, faithful in her tasks, but plying them with an absent mind, a girl of few words and no complaints. To her it had never mattered that her father and brothers, whom she served, were not men after her heart; she had not troubled to think what they might have been; her place was with them—unless some day the great blessing should come to her, one noble and gentle; yet she set the thought aside, for her business was not with herself.

Sitting without the gate she saw a man unknown to her, laden with a pack and climbing the hill. He paused beside her and enquired for the house of Phegeus. By the pious rules of the land hospitality must not be denied; but, while he awaited Phegeus, she watched him from the next room, for her father would trust her eyes and according to her observation either harbour him or dismiss him with the bare necessities. He was a young man, strong and lusty, but wild-eyed, with the bearing of a prince, but the fearsomeness of a caitiff. She passed him on some housewifely pretext to see whether he would speak as other travellers had spoken, familiarly and boldly, sometimes with evil in their hearts.

"Come not near me," he said, "for I may do you harm;" yet he did not say it to threaten her; this was plain from his voice.

She paused.

"I am not afraid of you," she answered.

"Danger comes to those who are not afraid."

"But it becomes men not to fear danger—and women too."

"It becomes all to fear the gods."

She wondered what he meant and looked at him steadfastly.

"But you are no god."

"A poor mortal."

"And you need help and you fear the gods. Why should I be afraid of you?"

"I do indeed need help," he said, and returned her look. She was gentle; where had he seen such desire to help?

An old man entered the room.

"My father," she said.

Alcmaeon made himself known to Phegeus, whose turn it was to fear him, whether as a great prince or as a refugee under curse for a deed of blood. Should he break bread with him?

Arsinoe spoke a word. The chieftain led the suppliant to the crude, timber temple, decorated with the skulls of oxen slain in sacrifice, and there purified him, that the house and the village might not be polluted. Alcmaeon saw before him, not the sceptre of Hera, but the flower of Aphrodite. The rite having been performed, he was admitted

as guest; and, when the sons of Phegeus returned, they commended their father's action; for who could avoid slaughter? Pronoos hoped great things from the guest-friendship thus established, for how should Cyanippos rule Argos? but he said only that the matter now lay with the gods, who would not recompense their good will with evil.

Arsinoe thereafter heard the story from Alcmaeon again, with more concerning his mother and his boyhood. To her he could speak; for she followed his thought, often in silence, sometimes with a word which showed that her silence was agreement or with surprise that a wife could be such as Eriphyle—simple words covered with honesty.

At first Alcmaeon was manned by the thought of the deed accomplished, the duty done. Then, with peace, the memory became more abhorrent, the action seemed, not his own, but that of some righteous fury, which had possessed him; with Arsinoe beside him he became himself again, gentle, obedient, as he was in his youth and would ever have been; not such as in those moments of his life when he had dared—what he dared not remember. To escape the remembrance he stayed by Arsinoe more willingly than he went with her brothers, though with them he lay in the fields and guarded the possessions of the peasants. These, however, eyed him askance; they knew his crime and feared for themselves.

After a time Alcmaeon asked Phegeus for the hand of his daughter, mistrustfully, since his fate was that no land should receive him, but hoping in the protection of Aphrodite. Phegeus was doubtful; the purification might not avail with the goddess nor the goddess against the Alastores predicted by Amphiaraos; evil might befall the country. Arsinoe entreated him. Her heart was with Alcmaeon, his sad face, his clear eyes. No harm, she said, could come to the house with such a man. Agenor thought otherwise. They had done enough for the stranger and now awaited the judgment of heaven. Pronoos was urgent against the marriage. He knew that Euryalos, the nephew of Adrastos, was ruling Argos as guardian of Cyanippos, and said that the divine anger was already visiting Alcmaeon,—that his mind was troubled and his conduct strange.

And indeed Alcmaeon misdoubted his own state. Whence was it that at times he saw blood-spots on his hands which Arsinoe could not see? was he mad or was she covering the truth? whence this burning and need of water? He could find peace only by running brooks. The sons of Phegeus would discover him with his hands plunged in the current.

"He knows his guilt," they whispered to one another. "He is possessed; he does not see us, else he would not betray himself."

Arsinoe, to whom he would tell all, considered him a sick child: "He needs love; it was bitter

to his nature to be made the instrument of his father's wrath."

The more he gave reason for suspicion, the more she clove to him. She overbore her father; and her brothers could not resist the decision of Phegeus.

XXII

Now, when a son, Clytios, was born to husband and wife, a drought came upon Phegea; the earth was parched; the grass withered; the cattle were lean; should this endure, there would be no harvest and no food. With the drought Alcmaeon became worse; his lips trembled; he could not form his words; a fever came upon him; he was the prey of visions and terrors and spoke terrible things. Arsinoe strove to soothe him, understanding what he meant and overlooking what he said; but, love mingling with fever, naught could cool him; he would escape from her at night to lie in the river-bed at the meeting of the waters, and return in the morning with dank body and dripping hair. Afterward rain fell, but in floods, washing away the planted soil and beating down the vines. On this followed mist day after day; the scanty ears and grapes that had weathered the storm mouldered in the dampness; the fruits of the trees were blighted, the nuts rotten in their shells. The people accused Alcmaeon and besought Phegeus that he might depart from them.

With the mist driving in his face Alcmaeon had become himself. His judgment was clear, and it was that of the people. From the beginning, when the sun seemed to stand still in the sky to fix the earth with his darts, he knew himself under watch of heaven, and, when the fever was at its height, straining the chords of his heart and binding him for salvation from himself to Arsinoe, in the tumult of his mind he had yet seen that his was the fault: he had not obeyed his father. Arsinoe had resisted him then; now she believed him when he said:

"I am a curse to you and to this land and shall be a curse to my son; and this is enough; but you, Arsinoe, are also a curse to me through our love; for nought that holds me to the warmth of life but is denied me and a sin to seek; this burning assails me because I cannot quit you, my last tie to earth and home. Perchance a god shall cleanse me in deep waters when I reach the land whereon the sun hath never shone. Till then I am hers who follows me wherever I go, a blanched face and terrible. Release me and save yourself and my son; for me you cannot save."

And Arsinoe, filled with compassion, said to him:

"Go, for I love you as you are. Seek your soul's health, and blessed be she at whose hands you shall receive it."

For she doubted not that only from a woman should healing come to him.

XXIII

In those days the father of rivers opened his arms; and there arose between them a low-lying land, slippery with water-growths. And Alcmaeon believed that either here or only beyond the river of death should he find peace; for, as Tlepolemos, after bloodshed, had been forgiven in Rhodes new-risen from the great sea, so this waste whereon the sun had never shone might be the gift of the gods to him for a resting-place. He therefore followed Achelous to his fount from the caverns of earth and was washed a second time with divine rites and sped under water to the shingles. There he arose cool and sane; and the daughter of Achelous came by night from the river-bed, and her embrace was as water around him; and as water her hair fell on his face. The rushing of water divided him from human homes; and by day he saw the sun and was not mad nor repented of his deed; but at twilight he was beset by visions, and his mind was shaken till she came, and his eyesight was dulled, and his ears closed to all save the sound of the river, and he sank into sleep. Of them were born two sons, Amphoteros and Acarnan, for whom she prayed to Zeus, and they grew twice seven years in one night, fresh lads with liquid eyes and rippling hair, but warm with the blood of their father. They were ever on the banks of the river or in the stream, wet and shining, a fair sight, and they slept on the surface of an

inlet, moored like boats; but under the surface they could not live, because they were not as the goddess, their mother, but half of earth and half of water.

But now Callirhoe said to Alcmaeon: "See what I do for thee and thou doest naught for me. Fetch me the robe and necklace of Harmonia, which Arsinoe keepeth, that I may know if thou lovest me." For her nature was as that of water which abideth not. And Alcmaeon answered: "For the robe and the necklace Arsinoe careth no whit, for her mind is above mortal things; nevertheless this glory is for them who desire nor earth nor water and shall not be thine." When she heard this she came no more to him by night; and by day he saw clear, and the rushing waters soothed him, but at night, and all night till dawn, the fury came upon him; and he cried and groaned aloud in repentance. Whereat Amphoteros and Acarnan were grieved; and Amphoteros said to him: "Let me go to Delphi, that we may learn from the god whether thou shouldest do for my mother as she would." And he went; and Apollo gave answer that the robe and necklace must be brought to his temple. Then Callirhoe came from the flood to hear the command of the oracle; but Amphoteros told her only: "My father goeth to Phegea." She, hearing this, called to her privily the man Pheron and said: "My husband, thou knowest, is mad. Go with him lest, in his madness, he bring not to me that which Arsinoe shall give him."

XXIV

Alcmaeon, touching again the green shores of earth, waked from a dream. The last of that dream was the beckoning of his boys from the island; for thus they bade him farewell; but, as he turned his face eastward, he doubted whether the boys and the island and Callirhoe were real; and the fragments of their speech which he remembered were strange to him. He saw the sweet fields and cottages again, and men bearing faggots and women lifting pails and boys sharpening their knives on the thresholds of the doors and blue smoke curling from the chimneys against the pines and firs. And there was silence about him or sounds distinct and intelligible. The chill comfort of his unearthly bride passed from him; he was a man with men and cheerful in their ways. The old days came back to him again, the days with Parthenopaeos, the days of Aegialeus—before the burning of passion and madness had driven him to the rivers. His early sympathies clutched him. Would he could have remained among them, not asking for more! Had he ever asked for more? Had not all been laid on him? by his mother, by his father, by his birth. By these he had been forced to outlaw himself. Then Arsinoe had helped him; but he had not needed help before. She was as no other woman; but he had not needed woman. He had passed

through fire and water; but before these was life and love and fresh air, no dreams but miracles of fact. Little things came back to him, the cap of Aegialeus, the dislike of Parthenopaeos for warm baths, the toys of Cyanippos. Why had he not been content with boyhood? Why had his ambition outstretched it? Great deeds are our undoing. No; he had been right; his boyhood had been right; and now with the eyes of boyhood he could judge of his manhood; he had done well; the man had accomplished the tasks set him by the boy. He had not chosen Aegialeus, but the things which Aegialeus would have chosen; so doing he had lost all; it was well.

The sun stood high and fell on his head; he was watched from heaven, but his upward glance feared nothing. He saw all in one, heaven and earth, his chamber in the palace and the dark vault of Oropos, Parthenopaeos drawing his bow and himself sitting in judgment on his mother, the conquest of Thebes and sleep in the island. Naught mattered till all was done; then it should be seen as it was.

A woodman passed him with a salute; an old woman offered him grapes and would not take his money; in a doorway he saw a child dandled by its mother. These people lived in thoughts of one another amid small things, as he had lived during the first year with Arsinoe, taking happiness for his aim. He could not live so now. Not in vain had the waters passed over him, bathing

him in their divine uncertainties, chilling his human sense.

Pheron overtook him. Alcmaeon turned on the slave in fury. "Who told you that I should need you? Begone and let me not see you again."

Pheron bowed and turned homeward, but, obedient to his mistress, he soon took a side-path which would lead him by a longer road to the gulf and to Phegea.

Alcmaeon went on alone, as he fancied; but, when Pheron turned from the highroad, two boys, eager and active, were already on their way from the island. As their father departed they consulted hurriedly. Was he safe alone, with his fits? An adventure would delight them; and they might help. They took some sackfuls of food—no clothes; it was always too hot on land. Soon they were after him, and they caught sight of him after Pheron had left him. They followed at a distance, since they had not been bidden to come, out of sight, but peering around trees at every turn of the road for assurance that he was before them, scampering like young goats to make up the plain stretches where, had he turned, he might have seen them. At Naupactos they nearly missed him, when he crossed the gulf, for their boat was slow; and, when they gained track of him again, it was because they were about to enquire at a hut within which he was sitting. Away they ran before he had seen them; but they had seen him. Afterward they were more cautious and fell behind.

" If we had enquired which road he was to take, we should not have needed to seek and hide from him thus," said Amphoteros.

" Yes ; but we did not know," said Acarnan.

Alcmaeon went on before them. The track left the plains and climbed the rugged clefts of Erymanthos ; the rocks closed him in ; he topped the pass and followed a brook which fell towards the Aroanios. The cool of the island had deserted him on his sunny journey. As a bird nearing the earth he descended from his high vision. He was a man with men and feared the ways of men and his home and the sons of Phegeus ; but more than men he feared the oncoming twilight and the sights of the dark ; he would not yield to them. The rocks parted and rose high and wide ; the valley broadened ; the Aroanios rushed to his side ; a little and he should see the long path upward to the city. He recognized a village. What was its name ? he strove to recollect it, but it was blotted from his mind ; his mind was a blot ; all was gone from him, all his apprehension of facts ; the precious memories of the morning were dim ; he struggled to abide by the beliefs of daylight ; but he was alone amid darkness and approaching fires. Suddenly he shrieked and fell by the wayside helpless. People passed him ; he could not speak to them, nor would they understand his cry for help. " He is an enemy of the gods," they said, or " He is drunk." He saw them as beings in a Paradise which he could not reach,

happy because they lived in the world which was around them, the world from which he was torn by invisible powers; the Erinnyes were upon him. He felt for his dagger; with a thrust into his side he could escape them.

Then Alcmaeon arose; the determination of madness shone in his eyes, the command of Apollo, the one hope. To others the task might be given in vain, not to him. The window-light was ahead. Trembling and tottering he knocked at the door of Arsinoe.

XXV

Fastening his eyes on her and striving to speak clearly, he related his errand. Her brothers were with her; but he might not be able to tell it again. They murmured; they were now lords of Phegea, since Phegeus was dead; they could refuse the treasure; but this wanderer—they feared him and the light in his eyes, and the curse of the god which he might bring, lest it should pass his lips. Sullenly they gave their consent. Arsinoe withdrew him to her chamber, for she saw the signs of his face: a moment and the fit would be upon him, and her brothers would believe naught. Once alone with her, his strength failed him. He fell on the couch, raving of Aegialeus lying asleep before the wheels of a brazen chariot.

"Waken him; it will pass over him; it will kill him. The lion and the boar are dragging it toward him, goaded by the queen my mother, who stands over them in her flashing raiment. Waken him! he lies across the royal road; they will kill him."

Arsinoe spoke to her husband, but she was not heard. Then she brought the child, Clytios, and laid him in his father's arms. Alcmaeon sighed; his head sank; he slept.

After a time Arsinoe wakened him.

"Await not the morning," she said. "My brothers are together. I trust them not. Go to the wall under the window. I will drop the treasure to you. Take it and flee."

Alcmaeon rose refreshed. He passed the surly glance of the brothers.

"I do not sup with you," he said.

"Nor would we sup with an outcast, accursed of gods and men," they replied. "Sleep not in the house, and begone to-morrow."

Behind him they closed the door.

Amphoteros and Acarnan were on the watch. They saw what was done by the window in the wall, and then ran over the hill in the darkness. Once far from the town they might speak to their father; he could not but take them with him. The joy of the surprise!

As Alcmaeon made his way under the wall toward the Erymanthos, Pheron entered Phegea by the water-gate. He asked the brothers for Alcmaeon.

"He is gone," they said, "from the house."

"It matters not, if he went unburdened. I was to bring the treasure, which is his gift to my mistress, lest he should go mad and leave it by the way."

"He carried nothing," said the brothers; "the treasure is safe."

But when they sought for it, it could not be found.

The brothers then saw the deceit, as they supposed, of Alcmaeon. It was not for the god but for Callirhoe that he had stolen the robe and necklace, dishonouring Arsinoe and his word. They ran down to the Aroanios. At the foot of the path they met a peasant. No one, he said, had passed that way. Then he must have gone by the Erymanthos on the other side of the city—to Delphi, not to Oeniadae. He had spoken the truth. But they were enraged; he had taken their sister's dowry, their all. They followed him over the hill.

An hour from Phegea the boys halted in a wood. Here they would make themselves known to their father. They listened for his approach, since they could see nothing. There was a sound of voices in the distance; they ran toward it. Yes; the loud voice was their father's. Then there was a light as of fire between the trees. The wrappings of Alcmaeon's pack had fallen away and the sheen of gold and jewels illumined the faces of three men. The boys could see the sons of Phegeus grappling

their father. Alcmaeon, however, was stronger than the two and laid them on the ground. Amphoteros called to his brother. As Pronoos and Agenor struggled to their feet two arrows hit them; and they fell dead; but Alcmaeon swayed from side to side. The sword of Agenor had pierced him as he threw them off. He toppled over on his back. His boys knelt beside him and spoke to him; he knew them, but could not speak. He lay clenching a hand of each and groaning terribly. Suddenly a shudder shook his whole body; he sat upright and then fell back. His fingers loosened. He lay, a haggard man with ragged beard, and blank eyes on the stars.

Amphoteros and Acarnan carried his body to a hollow at the side of the road and sprinkled earth upon it. They could do no more, fearing to remain. Then they shouldered the treasure and journeyed toward Delphi.

When they were gone, a woman with a child on her back hung by the hands from the window-sill of the house of Phegeus and dropped to the ground. She followed the Erymanthos till she found the two bodies and, led by blood-tracks, the third. She sat beside it and wept bitterly. The infant wailed. She took it in her arms and bore it to Tegea.

THE END

HYPERMESTRA

una de multis face nuptiali
digna periurum fuit in parentem
splendide mendax et in omne uirgo
nobilis aeuom.

HORAT. *Carm.* III. xi.

HYPERMESTRA

I

THE youth lingered a moment to explain to the princess that he must lock the room, not to imprison her but to protect her, since none could be left on guard outside: all must join the troop of her defenders already arrayed under the two kings to resist the Egyptian assault. In an unfavourable event the soldiers would collect about the door. The words sounded ominous: were not the walls strong, the defenders sufficient? Yes; but every man was needed. "And you among them?" "Why not?" he answered with a smile.

She heard the bolts moving under the key and was alone, sitting on the edge of the couch in a daze of excitement. She had shown no weakness all that day, and her fortitude and anger were not spent. Her brave appeal had seconded her father when he besought Pelasgos by ties of blood to give refuge to suppliants. There, in the open rustic peribolos, surrounded by rude figures of the patron gods, this poor girl, who, till her

journey began, had hardly ever come forth from the palace and courts where she was brought up, had taken courage to speak against the barbarism of her kin ; and each word had seemed to her an act of defiance, (since few beseemed a woman and none in public,) as each step over the rough country-side had been an adventure in the world, so different was all from the guarded life of the great keep in Egypt on the city wall. Thence she could look down on the outer sands and on the men and beasts prowling below her, but she might leave the windows unshuttered all night ; for none could climb the even and unbroken masonry to her high windows. Within them quiet and feminine labours continued ; day passed into night and night into day in one stretch of time hardly broken by the ceremonies which she attended in state, until the summons reached her to follow her father from Egypt to Greece. Danaus had been deprived most unjustly of his realm by his brother Aegyptus, whose sons, not content with this, pursued the Danaids, wishing to confirm conquest by marriage. Marriage, according to the law of the land, could have been imposed on the maidens with the consent of their father ; and he had not the power to resist save by escape ; but he had always been to his daughters well-nigh a god, and now bound them to himself in gratitude as in duty. At night he led them secretly to the waterside, where a boat was waiting ; and before discovery they were far out at sea. Yet the sons of Aegyptus

would have overtaken them, had their course been known, for the vessel of the pursuers was swift and well-manned with oarsmen, whereas the shallop which Danaus had been able to procure by stealth floated at the mercy of the winds. At some harbour, where they had been obliged to put in, news must have reached the men, or passing vessels may have carried it; for, when the king landed at Apobathmoi, his frightened covey of daughters could already perceive the vermilion sails of their cousins on the sky-line. In haste they reached Lerna, whither a herald had summoned King Pelasgos from Argos because he would not admit them to the city without parley. The parley had been long and doubtful; the elders were called, lest the town should not back the royal decision. Finally, fear of Zeus Hikesios and of Hermes and Artemis, the conductors of the refugees, rather than the ancient bond of kin through Io, had secured alliance between the two kings and such protection as Argos could afford; its scattered citizens had been called by galloping messengers from their farms; and now the small city, hardly more than a village, though walled, was in state of defence, and the Danaids enclosed in the long, low building which sufficed the monarch of that humble land.

For Greece was at its beginnings, and the Peloponnesus an unknown corner of the world. The lonely castle of the Atridae was not yet standing on the foothill of the mountain toward the East;

the Cyclopes had not yet built toward the sea the long corridors of Tiryns; knightly tradition had not yet been implanted by the Heraclids. A race of rustics akin to their neighbours, the simple Arcadians, who descended from the times before the moon, won its sustenance from the hard soil, never dreaming of the fortified Acropolis which was so soon to crown the little hill of Larisa. The great world broke in on this retreat with the Egyptian ship; and its men surrounded the city as wolves a pasture. That was the meaning perhaps of a portent which the Argive augurs knew not how to interpret. A stone's throw from the city a wolf had pulled down a bull. The invader, it seemed, was to conquer; but was he Danaus or the prince his nephew? or was the victor no invader but the symbol of the city? the wolf of Argos, overcoming masculine brutality.

Hypermestra listened, knowing that the supreme moment which would give an answer to all her fears had come, that the combat was already engaged. What she did not know was that her own herald within the city was plotting its betrayal, hoping for a recompense of power in Egypt instead of exile in Greece with his liege ladies.

The room was dimly lighted by a single lamp; darkness gathered and hung along the cornice. When Hypermestra raised her bewildered eyes, she saw only shadows, but in one of them, deeper than the rest, two sparks like eyes. She rose in fright; and, as she moved, the beams died away.

Then the darkness began to form into a shape, a robe falling in straight folds, a hand. She seemed to be again in Egypt, in a temple, at one of the nightly mysteries, and this a statue of her own goddess and ancestress. The thought enlightened her. It was a statue; and the two lights were the gems which formed the pupils of the eyes; but it was not Io; it was Aphrodite, whom she would have hated if she had dared, Aphrodite with an impassive sweetness, caring nothing for her fears, no saviour. Thus was she pursued, not only by men, but by gods; Artemis and Hermes had guided her only to her enemy's feet.

The bars rang in their rings, and Danaus appeared. He told her in haste that the town had been betrayed and its citizens forced to surrender. Could Pelasgos see his subjects slaughtered around him?

"But we? Are we then to fall into the hands of our insolent cousins?" asked Hypermestra.

"These were the terms of surrender, if the Argives were to be spared," he answered; "I had to swear to them"; but he unfolded to her his own plan unknown to Pelasgos. To each of the ladies a dagger had been given. The suitors were to come at night, after their feast and wine, suspecting nothing. At the sound of a trumpet all were to be slain. Her sisters had already sworn. Would she swear and receive her dagger?

For a moment she hesitated, not to do the deed, for she had been driven back on her own

defence, but for her father. He, who had always been her final law, was now ready to parry injustice as alone it could be parried; it was a man's act, but full of danger. Despite her revolt she could not quell her fear of that god to whom he had himself appealed against Aegyptus.

"Beware," she said, as if she were a warning Fate, "of the vengeance of Horcos."

"I swore to give the bodies of my daughters, and I will not perform the oath. Would you have me perform it?"

A great indignation, the climax of all that she had felt since she was cast forth from her home, took possession of her. Unhelped, she would help herself against earth and heaven.

"I swear," she said.

II

The king departed. She had but one thought now: to do the deed. As a beast that has found its hiding-place whence it may spring on the passer-by, she crouched and waited.

A servant came, bringing supper; she waved it away, but it was left beside her. The eyes again sparkled as in anger. What cared she for anger, human or divine? She must be strong. Then the remembrance that she would need strength bade her rise and eat against her will and

drink of the thin wine. But food and exhaustion worked together. As she faced this one thought of vengeance, sleep overcame her, and for two hours she lay beneath the sparkling eyes, which, had she known it, covered her with a benignant radiance. She awoke fancying herself again in her Egyptian home, in quiet, and happy. She sat up to call for her tirewoman. Then she saw where she was and remembered what she was to do; but her overwrought nature was now unstrung, slack from slumber; she was ready to break down and weep; she approached the statue, imploring the mercy of the goddess; then, lest she should be taken unawares, found the bed again and withdrew the dagger from the coverlet where she had hidden it, and slipped the point up her sleeve.

She sat on a seat and thought of Lynceus, who had been her suitor and was now to be her ravisher, how she had rejected him, hoping that he might press her; but he had answered: "Very well; I shall find another." Why had he followed her? he, who was thus indifferent. It was strange. A careless youth, devoted to his pastimes, to his horse, to his music, neglectful of the duties open to him as a son of the king, moving hither and thither without a purpose, his suit of her could be but his customary levity. Why had he undertaken this adventurous voyage unless for her father's kingdom? Yet he had seemed to care for reign as little as for her.

The door opened and he entered, clad in a long feasting-robe. She rose to resist him, but turned away gently, for she bethought herself that only by stealth could she place the wound; she must affect bashfulness or submission. By chance she had thus approached the statue.

"Still shy, my lady? or is Aphrodite to witness our vows?"

She was silent.

"We had a hard time of it. Those Argives, they fought well, though you should have seen them at table. Rough fellows! I wonder that you prefer them to us. Naturally they would fight for you."

"They fought for honour," said Hypermestra.

"Ah well, I dare say, but with an eye to chances. They are satisfied to be done with it now and to let you go."

"To let us go!"

"Yes; what did they want—except yourselves? Did they need your father for a second king? and could not Pelasgos find another queen beside my princess?"

"Do you mean that I was to be his wife?"

"Unless mine."

Hypermestra could hardly believe that she heard aright. Was she thus to be bartered for a new kingdom in the event of victory?

"You damsels do not know what you are at. It was good of us to follow you to bring you back home."

She turned toward him.

"But I will not go with you." The words escaped her. She should have shown no defiance, rather consent, an unwilling but still apparent consent.

"I don't mind," said he; "we have done our part—uselessly; and you shall be left to your Argives. I'm only sorry about Butes—you know, the lad who locked you in."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes; he had fire-light in his eyes which I think that you put in them. I tried to avoid him; but he made for me, and I had to run him through. It is the kind of harm that you women do. Well, well. One one day and one another; we have all our time. But I am tired."

Herewith he cast off his robe, under which was only a slight crinkly shirt of white linen supported by bands over the shoulders. This was the moment. A thrust would have been enough, and the weapon was in her hand.

But, with the thought of Butes dead, she could not look on this other, no longer a prince in apparel as she had always seen him, but only a young man and tired. She drew her left forearm over her eyes. Yet without seeing she could not aim; she must look. But when she uncovered her eyes he was no longer before her. He had thrown himself on the couch, and lay there like a child.

III

Soon he was fast asleep, his cheek resting on one hand. "A better moment," thought Hypermestra; but her father's words recurred to her: "At the sound of the trumpet." Yes; it was too soon; had she killed the man when he stood before her, she would have defeated the plot, for he would have cried out and given the alarm to his brothers. How weak she was! calling on her courage when she wanted judgment; and even her courage had failed her!

She sat by the bed and watched the sleeper, as she had watched a slave-boy who used to sing to her, accompanying himself on the trigonon. She had asked to nurse him, when he was ill. But he was only a woolly-headed child, brought up to do her bidding; and this was a man who did not regard her; and she was watching, not to nurse him, but to kill him—after Butes—was not one enough to die for her? was she worth both? or either? What was this presumption which had led her over land and sea? Greater than theirs who challenged death for her. Was not this better than gentleness? her gentleness, with the poniard in her sleeve. She vied with men, but not for them as they for her. Butes was dead; the man before her was to die. For what? Because he followed her. Why should he follow her? Was it for the kingdom? was it for love?

And if it were not for love, yet he lay there helpless, sleeping. She had never seen a man asleep. What was she to measure herself against that helplessness ?

A smile played on the lips of Aphrodite, and the straight folds moved. On the warm air of the summer night a scent of earth and trees was borne about the room.

He stirred in his sleep. She drew the coverlet over him, a wrong action (she thought as she did it), for the heavy stuff would muffle the dagger, and she had but little strength to drive it home, little and every moment less.

He turned again and murmured in his sleep. She would have caught his words but could not.

Of a sudden she heard the trumpet and immediately cries from the neighbouring rooms.

She fell on him, but not with the dagger.

" Awake ! awake ! you will be murdered."

He started and half opened his eyes.

" Awake ! awake ! All your brothers are murdered. Hide yourself."

" My brothers ? " he replied, starting up.

" Yes," she said. " 'Tis done. Hide yourself."

" No ; I must go to them." He rushed to the door to open it.

Quick and deft came the woman's answer. " If they find you, they will kill me."

A shout was heard from the corridor. " Princess, princess, the deed is done."

She had but time to drag him to the niche of

Aphrodite and to thrust him into the darkness when the room was filled with blood-stained creatures, shouting with the joy of victory. One had brought her husband's head, a ghastly proof. Danaus appeared on the threshold, and spoke to her, but what he said could not be heard for the tumult.

"And Lynceus? where is Lynceus? Show us his body."

"I have not killed him. He is gone. He did not come," she added, contradicting herself.

"He did come," they howled. "You have suffered him to escape."

"This was not so," said Danaus. "My daughter would not so belie her blood."

"It was so," said Hypermestra. "He is somewhere about the city, unless he has climbed the walls."

"He is here," said Lynceus, coming forward.

All turned on the young man standing beneath the statue, himself a second statue, unless both were living; for now the hands of the goddess were extended over him. The Danaids would have slain him, but their father held them back.

"A suppliant, my children. Speak, Hypermestra. How came you to spare the enemy? you who had given your word."

Hypermestra glanced at him, and turned away.

"Women," said she, "if you be women, I could not kill him. I had sworn and determined to do so. I awaited him; but, when he came

and laid aside his greatness and did not strive with me—ah, if he had commanded or threatened, my blood would have risen; if he had embraced me, I should have stabbed him; but he spoke to me as if I were a child; he left me to myself and fell asleep; and I became as a child, and I longed to lay my head beside his. There is no other reason. Do with me as you will."

At this the women set upon her; but Lynceus rushed to her rescue.

Then strangely the daggers fell from their hands; there was an awful silence; the marble lips moved, and a voice the like of which is not given to mortals possessed the room.

"She hath done well. She hath been nobly false. Mine eyes were upon her and I taught her wisdom. As the rain falls from heaven and wounds the earth, her heart was pierced; wherefore no useless task of unchecked maidenhood shall be hers, but, as Lynceus' bride, shall she build me a shrine in her kingdom of Argos, and she shall stand beside me, honourable unto all time."

THE END

CAENEUS AND CAENIS

Iuuenis quondam nunc femina Caeneus
Rursus et in ueterem fato reuoluta figuram.

VERGIL. *Aen.* VI. 448-9.

CAENEUS AND CAENIS

I

ALL sat around the fire on the hard earthen floor under the smoky rafters; and Eilatus desired of his son that he would sing a song; for Periphas was of the choir-lads and had sung alone at the Itonian feast, leading the choir behind the long-robed minstrel; but now he took the phorminx himself from the peg where it hung, and as he was stood before them, his limbs gleaming in the fire-light, fair as Achilles when in the cave he sang for Chiron. And Caenis listened for a song like that sung by Achilles of the grasp of Heracles on the neck of the Argive lion or of Theseus grappling the Minoan bull; but vexed she was when Periphas, having struck the chords, recounted the vain desires of Coronis, who, though she bore within her the unsullied seed of the god, yearned nevertheless for a mortal, nor would she await the birth of her child that she might be wedded to Ischys, but mixed with him, whereat Artemis was angered and shot her with the sure bolt, and, when the girl was placed on the pyre, Apollo came, and the

flames divided before him, and he rescued his son from the womb of the dead, but her he brought not to life.

Now Caenis knew that he could not, for it were against the edict of Zeus; yet the thought chafed her that a woman might not choose her lot and marry when she would; for she thought rather of the lot of Coronis, though Ischys was her own brother. And indeed she hardly remembered him; he had died when she was a child, slain by the thunder-bolt of Zeus for his presumption. Eilatus, however, remembered bitterly and darted a glance at his son that he should thus strike home at his brother; but Periphas answered him with his brows; and the father knew that there was reason. Caenis also saw the look of Periphas, and understood that her father yielded to him now as always; for Eilatus was old and busied himself with sacrifices, nor would he thwart Periphas, who thus, though a lad, was master in the house. Caenis would have it so, loving none more than him and caring little for the justice and piety of her father; yet it irked her to be admonished by Periphas; and she divined that the song was chosen because Coronis had brought death into the family by her wilfulness. Nevertheless, reverencing her brother, Caenis did not speak her mind, but asked only in gentle words for another song—of some huntress. For her ambition was to be like Periphas and to hunt with him, whereas he ever told her that this sport was

not for maidens. She hoped therefore to remind him of goddesses and huntresses not thus confined to housewifely tasks, and to answer his reproof by her request, since at least no such passion as ruined Coronis lodged in her breast. Her fault was other and such as befitted the hard stock which had given to the Atracidae the lordship of the Lapiths in Gyrton. In the dangerous country, full of wild beasts and centaurs, she would wander without fear, though barely sixteen. Periphas had found her that day wading a strong torrent, and had caught her, when it would have carried her away and hurled her against the rocks. Thereupon he had spoken sharp words and needful. She had followed him home in silence, but hot at heart, cursing the chance that had made her a woman, and Periphas because he used authority as a man. She remembered the heroines and knew herself like unto them and would have Periphas remember them too, not such as Coronis, but those who had lived in the woods and equalled the deeds of heroes. He, seeing what was in her mind, began a song of Cyrene: how her arrows followed the deer and without weapons she throttled the cubs of panthers, holding them to her breast. But this song too came to an end like the first; for the same Apollo, though he slew her not, dragged her from the forests of Pindus and from her Lapith kinsmen and set her amid the flat sands of Libya to be the mother of many, and made her his wife.

Now Caenis would be the wife of none, neither man nor god, and, looking at the slender body of Periphas in the fire-light, she hated him for his beauty and power and because he or another man must control her outgoings and comings in.

II

So when all turned to rest, muffled in blankets on the hard floor in a circle with their feet to the dying embers, she could not sleep, but, when she knew that they were all asleep, she sat up; and the dim light fell on her wild eyes and on her hands clasped about her knees. For an hour she sat there like a statue. Then stealthily she arose and undid the latch of the door and placed a stone against it, because she could not fasten it from without, and went down to the sea-shore. And, as she looked at the waves, a head, broad-browed and long-haired, emerged from the water; and gentle and quiet eyes were fixed on her in which there was divinity, for she could not withdraw herself from their steady gaze, not even when the whole figure rose from the sea and came toward her. And she thought of Coronis and of Cyrene and would have cried out; but she knew that in these eyes was no bale but bliss. He asked wherefore she was come to him and what was her desire. Now Caenis had but one desire: to escape from womanhood and to become a man; but for

a time she could say nothing, and cast down her eyes, and they rested upon his shoulders. Then she was seized with trembling; for fear came upon her lest she should change and desire to remain a woman, since it seemed to her that nothing was needful to her happiness, so he should stand before her. She was ready to do his bidding and answered: "What thou wilt," and therewith flushed with shame. But he said: "What I will and what thou wilt, for thou wouldst be a man." These words were to Caenis as a spar cast to one drowning. She had but power to answer "Yes." And he said unto her: "Be thou, then, a woman." And the brine of the sea covered her from foot to head, and she heard words as in a dream, and received the might of Poseidon.

III

When morning was come, her parents sought for Caenis in vain, nor could they have found her, had they sought the world over; for there lay instead on the shore a fair youth in the dress of a girl. The long, level rays of the sun saluted him, when he arose, his heart strong within him and his limbs clothed with a glorious strength. He cast from him his female garments, and gave thanks to the sea-god; howbeit, remembering also his girlhood and the latticed days of desire, he now knew that manhood was other than she had

thought; for his eyes had cleared, and his mind was sobered, and he knew what could be and what could not be, and was nevertheless therewith content.

Then he heard a sound of singing and beheld a procession passing inland between the thickets. The song was the old wedding-song of the country-side, which Caenis could never bring herself to sing; but Caeneus followed gladly and, plucking flowers, made himself a chaplet like the rest. And when he was come to the board, the feasters received him kindly, not asking his name, but courteously waiting till he should have fed, and admiring his strength and grace. And they whispered one to another: "Is not this Hermes? for Meleager dwells afar in Calydon, and Hyacinth was laid low by the quoit through the jealousy of Zephyrus, and the son of Laomedon is in heaven"; for to none other could they liken him. With the company was Periphas, till then the favourite of the youths and the hope of the maidens; but they looked not on him, having their eyes fastened upon Caeneus. Periphas also, not knowing who the stranger was, saw none but him; and Perithous, the bridegroom, said to Hippodameia, the bride: "You had not married me, had you seen him first."

Then the gods, who give peace to no mortals, stirred the centaurs, an unruly rout, with the scent of wine borne to them on the wind; and they were wroth because they had not been bidden to

the festival. Wherefore they came crashing down the river-beds from Othrys and Pelion and Pholoe, where once the great teacher lived, friendly to man, but now the dwelling-place of savagery. They bore great branches torn from the trees and broke in upon the company just rising to form for dances. To the wine they went and seized the great bowls wherein it was mixed for serving and drank from them and thrust the Lapiths aside. But these, when they perceived that they were entreated unkindly and not as hosts, rose against their unbidden guests and dashed the vessels from their lips. Eurytus, the chief of the centaurs, drunk with huge draughts, laid hands on the bride and would have carried her off, but Theseus came between; and Latreus had taken a comely lad in his arms, whom Periphas strove to rescue, when Caeneus, catching up the lance which had been struck from his brother's hand, drove it deep into the monster's side. He fell to the ground and breathed forth his life. Then all the centaurs turned on Caeneus and attacked him with swords and spears which they had wrested from the Lapiths; but none could pierce him nor make him budge from his place. He did not evade the unwieldy beasts as they rushed upon him, but withstood them, immovable and impenetrable. Seeing this, they placed a shield on his head and thereupon a boulder which they hammered with their boughs; and Caeneus stood fast, but the ground gave way and he went down whole and

upright into the earth. After this was done the centaurs galloped off bleeding; and the bridal company assembled again and departed, saying among themselves that, if this stranger had not come and drawn upon him all the fury of the centaurs, they would not have returned alive.

IV

By the earth which covered the head of Caeneus the body of the centaur lay, a heavy mass like a monument. And with him dead was one living, Poseidon, who stood mourning. From his eyes and locks water dripped on the grave; and he communed with himself, upbraiding his brother by whose behest he might not bring the hero to life. But sharp is the divine mind, and he matched it with the decree of Zeus, neither resisting nor abandoning the dead, and he said: "As thou wilt and as I will; if not Caeneus, then Caenis"; and he smote the ground that it fell asunder in two banks; and, as a figure is released, when it is baken, from the split mould, the body of Caeneus, which had stood upright, fell on its back against one of the slopes. Whereat the god gazed in wonder. It went to his heart that the lad should be changed and his glory pass from him; yet, seeing that there was no help, but that he must remain dead, unless the charm were undone and the boy returned to girlhood, he smote the earth a second

time with his trident; and above the body a spring of sweet water gushed forth which covered it from head to foot, and he turned over as in sleep and as in a dream heard again the words which had been said on the seashore, but now said backward. And Poseidon could not abide the sight of his limbs softening and rounding, but went down to the beach and plunged in the gulf.

V

When he was gone, Caenis awoke; and the strength of the god had departed from her; and the level rays of the sunset fell on her. She arose, chill with water, and ran about to dry herself. When she was dry, her nakedness troubled her, and the air cooling. She sought the tree where Caeneus had hung her clothes, and put them on again. Then cheerily she went home and busied herself in the kitchen against the return of Periphas. He, when he came, told of the wedding and of the stranger who had fought so well, and had been driven fighting into the ground. "I could wish, my sister, that you were a man, for you would have been like him." Caenis smiled, but she said nothing, though for days her brother continued loud in praise of the stranger, and enquired concerning him in all the country around. No one knew who he was save Caenis, and none till she was old ever knew what Caenis knew, lest she

should cast on herself the shame of love; but within herself she was happy, knowing the good and serving it, as when she was a man. And all marvelled that she was now content and willing to be the helpmeet of another, and to ask for no more.

THE END

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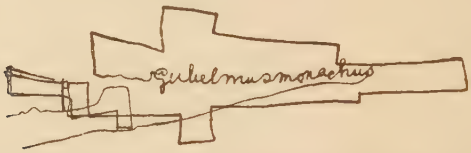

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